



RFS

District Information Pack

Southern Border

The Southern Border Team is part of the South Western Area Command. The nominated Incident Management Facility is located in Albury on the Southern Border of NSW to Victoria- Approximately 550Km South West of Sydney.

There are numerous population centres such as Holbrook, Culcairn, Henty, Corowa, Mulwala, Finley and Tocumwal in addition to a number of smaller villages and rural residential estates.

Albury City & Greater Hume Shires

The major population centres are Albury, Holbrook, Culcairn and Henty.

The area has on average 50 bush fires per year, of which very few can be considered to be major fires. The main sources of ignition in the area are:

- escapes from legal burning off
- lightning
- farm machinery
- travelling public
- trains
- incendiarism

Federation & Berrigan Shires

The major population centres are Corowa, Howlong, Mulwala, Berrigan, Finley, Tocumwal and Barooga.

The Murray River borders the area to the south which attracts a large tourist influx during the summer months and school holidays, particularly campers. The exact location of all these groups during these periods is not easily identifiable and this group are not necessarily knowledgeable of, or prepared for, a bush fire within their holiday vicinity.

The area has on average 50 bush fires per year, of which two to three on average can be considered to be major fires. The main sources of ignition in the area are

- lightning strikes
- machinery

1.1. Contact Information

District Office Address:	25 Airport Drive Albury NSW 2640
District Office Phone:	02 6051 1511
After Hours Contact:	Via State Operations on 02 8741 5400
A PSN Radio Channel:	140 STHBD A
B PSN Radio Channel:	240 STHBD B
PMR Channel:	2237 STHBD P – Primary Dispatch Channels
ESO Conversion Chart:	Please see file in folder for relevant conversion information
Fire Weather Forecast Area:	Eastern and Southern Riverina
Local Government Area:	Albury City, Greater Hume, Federation, Berrigan

1.2. Topography

The Southern Border area has differing topography across the district.

As a general rule the Federation Zone (West of Albury) is predominately rural with areas of flat grasslands/cropping country.

To the North East of Albury in the Holbrook to Jingellic localities (Hume zone) comprises of steep mountainous forested country. The landforms range from 700m of elevation at “Jocks Mountain” near Carabost State Forest to 300m elevation at “Morven’s Ridge” East of Holbrook.

“Nailcan Hill” to the immediate West of Albury township is approximately 400m in elevation.

There is approximately 13,802 sq km of State Forest and National Parks across the Southern Border area, broken up as follows:

- Albury LGA: 304.9 Sq/km
- Federation LGA: 5685 Sq/km
- Greater Hume LGA: 5746 Sq/km
- Berrigan LGA: 2066 Sq/km

1.3. Vegetation

The Southern Border area has a combination of grassland (Crops) in the West of Albury and Dry Sclerophyll Forest to the North East. There are also pockets of pine plantations in State Forests to the North East of the district.

Grasslands typically begin to cure during the month of November and are generally fully cured by December. Fuel loads in grasslands are subject to grazing and harvesting levels and are also influenced by the rainfall received during the winter and spring preceding. In 2021/22 (along with other parts of NSW) the area received above average and significant rainfall across the NSW Southern Border, which has promoted increased growth in particular the grasslands country in the Federation Zone.

Typically 6 Tonnes per hectare of fuel however some parts are in excess of this approx. 7-8 Tonnes per hectare.

1.4. Climate

Albury City & Greater Hume Shires

The climate in the Hume area is warm to hot during the summer period of November to March.

During the summer, dry storms producing lightning frequently occur. Winters tend to experience higher rainfall and lower temperatures.

The bush fire season generally runs from November to March. Prevailing weather conditions associated with the bush fire season in the Hume area are north-westerly winds accompanied by high daytime temperatures and low relative humidity.

There are also dry lightning storms occurring during the bush fire season in areas across the district, many being recorded around the softwood plantations and National Park in the east of the zone.

Federation & Berrigan Shires

The typical average climate in the Corowa Berrigan area is warm to hot during the summer period. Winters tend to experience lower temperatures and rainfall.

The bush fire season generally runs from November to February.

Prevailing weather conditions associated with the bush fire season in the area are north-westerly winds accompanied by high daytime temperatures and low relative humidity.

There are also frequent dry lightning storms occurring during the bush fire season.

1.5. Average Weather Data

Summary of major climate statistics recorded at Albury Airport recorded by the BoM (last updated 30 June 2024)

Element (Mean)	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep
Max Temp (°C)	21.2	25.4	28.8	31.2	30.9	27.6	22.7	17.8	13.9	13.0	14.8	17.7
Min Temp (°C)	7.9	10.9	13.3	15.5	15.4	12.4	8.5	5.5	3.4	2.7	3.6	5.5
Rainfall (mm)	59.7	63.5	49.0	59.4	42.4	49.1	45.8	55.8	68.2	77.7	77.6	61.9
3pm Temp (°C)	20.1	23.8	26.8	29.2	28.9	26.1	21.8	17.0	13.1	12.1	13.9	16.7
3pm wind (km/h)	11.0	10.5	10.8	9.8	7.8	7.4	6.4	4.6	5.0	6.0	8.4	9.9
3pm RH (%)	47	41	36	33	36	38	45	58	65	68	60	56

Summary of major climate statistics recorded at Corowa Airport recorded by the BoM (last updated 21 July 2024)

Element (Mean)	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep
Max Temp (°C)	22.3	26.7	30.2	32.1	31.4	28.0	22.6	17.8	13.9	13.1	15.0	18.5
Min Temp (°C)	8.1	11.1	13.7	15.8	15.7	12.7	8.6	5.7	3.5	2.8	3.7	5.7
Rainfall (mm)	52.2	42.8	41.3	37.0	37.2	38.0	36.7	46.5	56.2	54.3	52.9	48.0
3pm Temp (°C)	20.5	24.8	27.8	30.1	29.9	16.8	21.7	17.2	13.4	12.3	14.0	16.7
3pm wind (km/h)	13.4	14.6	15.7	14.2	11.2	11.5	10.0	9.2	9.2	9.7	11.9	12.9
3pm RH (%)	46	38	33	32	33	36	44	56	67	68	60	55

1.6. Known Radio Comms Blackspots

- Bowna Wyamh valley
- Lower River Road West of Tocomwal towards Deniliquin
- Bungowannah Jindera Rd

1.7. Hazards

1.7.1. Transportation

The Hume Highway (M31) is the main transportation route running NE to SW through the centre of the Southern Border area connecting Southern NSW to North East Victoria.

Other key roads in the district include:

- Riverina Highway
- Federation Way
- Olympic Highway
- The main Melbourne to Sydney railway line passes through the Zone and has been a known ignition source in the past decade.

1.7.2. Abandoned Mine Shafts

There are various abandoned mine shafts scattered throughout the district. Nailcan Hill to the immediate West of Albury has numerous mine shafts however we believe these to be filled and otherwise clearly identified.

1.7.3. Quarries

Numerous Active quarries in the Southern Border area.

1.7.4. Agriculture

Traditional agricultural operations are present in the Southern Border Team:

- Crops such as Wheat, Barley and Canola
- Livestock such as Cattle, Sheep and the Southern Hemispheres Largest Piggery in Corowa- “Rivalea”

1.7.5. Renewable Energy

There are 2 major and 1 minor solar photovoltaic farms and 1 minor hydroelectric power station in the Southern Border Team:

- Mulwala Solar Farm- 80MW Project
- Finley Solar Farm- 175 MW Project
- Corowa Solar Farm- 30 MW Project
- Hydroelectric Power Station- Mulwala Canal (South of Berrigan Township) 2.5MW Project

1.7.6. Aviation

- Albury Airport (Airport Drive, Albury) which is located near the Albury Fire Control Centre services commercial flights plus plane and helicopter charter flights.
- Corowa Aerodrome which is located to the West of the old Corowa FCC (now known as the Corowa training and Learning Centre). 2 runways and light planes no commercial flights however recreational gliders are active at the airport.

1.7.7. Defence

Wirlinga Defence Facility and ammunition depot - entry located on Knoble street, Thurgoona. 370 hectares located 5km East of Albury. Used as a demolition range and the use of hazardous storage compounds to store waste materials. The site contains numerous EXO (Unexploded Ordinances). A very recent site inspection has been conducted by the NSW RFS including local district staff, group officers and Thurgoona Brigade captain.

1.7.8. Munitions Factory

Thales munitions factory in Mulwala supplies and sustains a range of products for the Australian Defence Force including: Munitions, weapons, ammunition etc.

A pre incident plan and a recent site inspection of Thales has been completed. Contact the FCC if details are required.

1.8. Land Management Authorities

Albury City & Greater Hume Shires

Land Manager	% of Area
National Parks & Wildlife Service	5.44
Forestry Corporation NSW	3.28
Department of Lands	3.80
Local Government	1.54
Private	85.94

Corowa & Berrigan Shires

Land Manager	% of Area
Forestry Corporation NSW	1.3
Department of Lands	1.9
Local Government	7.6
Private	95.0
Other	0.2

For more specific data on the Southern Border district, please follow the link to the Hume Bush Fire Risk Management Plan [here](#), and the Corowa Berrigan Bush Fire Risk Management Plan [here](#).

Note: These links will only work with internet coverage.

For further information regarding the Southern Border District Information pack, please contact the Operational Improvement team via email at **operational.improvement@rfs.nsw.gov.au**

